

Application No. 10/804,210
Amendment Dated May 9, 2005
Reply to Office Action of February 17, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:

By the present Amendment, claim 1 is amended and claim 3 is canceled. No new matter has been added. Claims 1, 2 and 4 – 22 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 12 and 20 being independent.

Applicant has carefully considered the contents of the Office Action and respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of the subject application in view of the explanations noted below.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Design Patent No. D477,571 to Huang et al. (the Huang '571 patent). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, since the Huang '571 patent clearly does not disclose, teach or render obvious the subject matter of independent claim 1.

Amended independent claim 1 recites, inter alia, the first and second ears being unitarily formed, or formed as one piece, with the connector housing.

The Huang '571 patent discloses an electrical connector having a latch beam extending rearwardly from an upper surface of the housing, as is clearly shown in FIGS. 1, 5 and 6. The first and second ears appear to be connected to the upper surface of the housing with the latch beam, as shown in FIG. 1. The Huang '571 patent does not disclose or suggest that the latch beam extends rearwardly from the front end of the housing, as recited in independent claim 1. The Huang '571 patent does not show first and second ears that are unitarily formed with the connector housing, as recited in independent claim 1. Lacking an element recited in claim 1, the Huang '571 patent does not anticipate claim 1 since a "claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." Verdegall Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California, 814 F.2d 628, 631 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Therefore, the Huang '571 patent does not anticipate or render obvious independent claim 1.

Claim 5, being dependent upon claim 1, is also allowable for the above reasons. Moreover, dependent claim 5 recites additional features further distinguishing it over the

cited patents, such as the rib extending higher than the first and second ears. Therefore, dependent claim 5 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited patents, particularly within the overall claimed combination.

Claims 1 – 4, 6 – 9, 11 – 17, 19 – 20 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,494,457 to Kunz (the Kunz '457 patent). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, since the Kunz patent clearly does not disclose, teach or render obvious the subject matter of independent claims 1, 12 and 20.

Independent claim 1 recites, inter alia, first and second ears unitarily formed with the connector housing. Independent claims 12 and 20 recite, inter alia, a rib extending outwardly from a latch beam at least as high as the first and second ears.

The Kunz '457 patent discloses a strain relief connector or boot 30 adapted to engage a plug 14. The boot 30 has wings 44 and 46 sized to extend above and beyond the free end 20 of the tab 18 to protect the tab from unwanted contact with any obstructions. The boot 30 is slidably disposed on the plug 14, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2. The wings 44 and 46 are integrally formed with the boot 30, as is clearly shown in FIG. 2. Thus, the Kunz '457 patent does not disclose first and second ears unitarily formed with the connector housing as recited in claim 1.

Furthermore, modifying the Kunz '457 such that the wings 44 and 46 are unitarily formed with the connector housing 14 is not obvious. As stated in col. 1, lines 32 – 39, a disadvantage associated with forming a plug with wings is that this “does not lend itself to easily retrofitting existing cable systems since the plug must be replaced.” Moreover, an object of the Kunz '457 patent is to provide “an improved boot for protecting a tab of a plug which is easily applied to an existing connection.” Col. 1, lines 46 – 49. Thus, the Kunz '457 expressly teaches away from modifying the connector housing 14 to have the wings 44 and 46 unitarily formed therewith.

As is clearly shown in FIG. 4, the free end 20 of the tab 18, which the examiner cites as being the rib recited in independent claims 12 and 20, does not extend at least as high as the wing 46. Thus, the Kunz '457 patent does not disclose a rib extending outwardly from a

latch beam at least as high as the first and second ears, as recited in independent claims 12 and 20. Furthermore, "the wings 44, 46 are sufficiently sized to extend above and beyond the free end 20 of the tab 18." Col. 3, lines 37 – 41. Thus, it would also not be obvious to make the free end higher since to do so would contravene the teaching of the Kunz '457 patent.

Therefore, the Kunz '457 patent does not disclose or render obvious the claimed features of Applicants' invention as recited in independent claims 1, 12 and 20, or their respective dependent claims 2, 4 – 11, 13 – 19 and 21 – 22.

Claims 2, 4 – 11, 13 – 19 and 21 – 22, being dependent upon claims 1, 12 and 20, respectively, are also allowable for the above reasons. Moreover, these dependent claims recite additional features further distinguishing them over the cited patents, such as the connector being an RJ-45 plug of claims 2 and 13; the rib extending higher than the first and second ears of claim 4; a portion of the rib tapering toward a rear end of the latch beam of claims 10, 18 and 21; and the rib being unitarily formed with the latch beam of claims 11, 19 and 22. Therefore, dependent claims 2, 4 – 11, 13 – 19 and 21 – 22 are not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited patents, particularly within the overall claimed combination.

Allowable Subject Matter

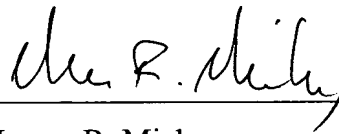
Applicants appreciate the indicated allowability of objected to claims 10, 18 and 21, which would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 2 and 4 – 22 are in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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